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Statement submitted by Association des Jeunes pour l'Agriculture du Mali, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

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Statement

The outcome of the implementation of the previous development agenda of the Millennium Development Goals has brought to light certain shortcomings, including the persistence of gender inequality, the gap between rich and poor and that between rural and urban areas. To hold these shortcomings in check and to ensure better performance for the current agenda, leaders and public and private partners should follow a people-oriented approach in their activities.

What mechanisms should be put in place to ensure better performance? Leaders who, in the years to come, are ineffective in achieving their goals will be depriving their peoples of the tools that they need to put behind them their precarious and dead-end lives.

But is any leadership, however outstanding, capable on its own merits of tackling the afflictions and threats that led to the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals?

Achieving results for the well-being of the public at large cannot be the sole responsibility of the leadership, but it is its responsibility to secure the participation and active involvement of leading figures in society. Success in securing such participation will surely be a key factor in achieving acceptable results by all.

It is therefore important to highlight the risks to attainment of the goals in the countries of the South if there is no active involvement by youth and by civil society. These stakeholders must in turn ensure that no one is left behind and must be actively involved in the collection and processing of data for an efficient assessment of implementation.

The challenges faced in achieving tangible outcomes in eradicating extreme poverty in vulnerable areas of sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will be met with an attentive and optimistic leadership capable of appreciating the deplorable conditions in which the populations of these areas live.

A leadership of this nature is an imperative in eradicating hunger because it will tackle the task of mobilizing investment for the infrastructure needed for good-quality health and education, for access to drinking water and for a healthy environment. It goes without saying that the acquisition and efficient use of these assets will help instil hope in dispirited young people.

These are the same young people who, unfortunately lacking the benefits of high culture, aspire to economic development, peace and justice, and the innovations and infrastructure of the large consumer societies. How are the talents of those young people, so eager to emigrate, but poorly educated — illiterate, even — to be rewarded in the big cities? With their patchy training, what equality will they be able to enjoy, alongside colleagues who benefited from well-structured training in mainland France?

If youth and civil society succeed in surmounting the challenges that they face in their search for sustainable means of attaining the Millennium Development Goals and other major national agendas, this will bring stability to young people in vulnerable areas. Without the stabilization of that labour force, the work necessary to ensure good economic performance will be impeded, to the detriment of the population.

Will the partnership necessary to attain the goals be strengthened in this process?